

A Resolution Declaring Middletown a Zero Waste Community

WHEREAS, Chapter 14, Article XVIII, §14-57 of the City of Middletown Ordinances charges the Resource Recycling Advisory Commission with improving waste reduction, reuse and recycling in the City and assisting with the development and implementation of City-wide resource conservation and sustainability programs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Middletown has positioned itself as an environmental leader among CT communities, by offering a broad array of recycling and reuse options in the community, including a swap shack, household hazardous waste disposal days for residents, numerous educational programs and Earth Day events, by committing to clean energy through the work of the Clean Energy Task Force, and by signing the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the City of Middletown is committed to protecting and enhancing environmental quality in the community now and for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Middletown was recognized as a leader and partnered with the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Zero Waste pilot project; and

WHEREAS the Zero Waste philosophy accepts that the earth's ability to support life is finite and that natural resources must be used in the most efficient and sustainable way possible; and

WHEREAS, the guiding principles of Zero Waste are: managing resources instead of waste, conserving natural resources through waste prevention and recycling, turning discarded resources into jobs and new products instead of into trash, promoting products and materials that are durable and recyclable, and discouraging use of products and materials that can only become trash after their use; and

WHEREAS, an estimated annual 32,000 tons of waste is generated in the City of Middletown by residents, businesses, and institutions, and approximately 78% of this amount is sent to incineration and to landfills; and

WHEREAS, although the City has reached an overall recycling rate of 22 percent, more can be done to remove valuable materials from the waste stream and "close the loop" by purchasing products made with recycled content; and

WHEREAS, the placement of materials in waste disposal facilities, such as landfills and incinerators, wastes natural resources, transfers liabilities to future generations, and has the potential to cause damage to human health and the health of other living things; and

WHEREAS, avoiding the creation of waste or discards in the first place is the most economically efficient and environmentally sustainable resource management strategy; and

WHEREAS, waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and composting are materials-management options that conserve resources while reducing environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS, consumers are currently forced to assume the high financial cost of collecting, recycling, and disposing of materials; and

WHEREAS, tax subsidies for waste and virgin materials send misleading economic signals to both consumers and producers; and

WHEREAS, a resource recovery-based economy will sustain, on a per-ton basis, up to ten times more jobs than landfilling or incineration, and these jobs will be more productive and meaningful; and

WHEREAS, with the appropriate economic incentives, manufacturers can and will produce and businesses will sell products that are durable and repairable and that can be safely recycled into the marketplace or nature; and

WHEREAS, increasingly, U.S. and international governments and organizations are adopting the policy that the financial responsibility for collecting, recycling, and disposing of materials belongs with producers; and

WHEREAS, government is ultimately responsible for leading by example and establishing criteria needed to eliminate waste, and for creating the economic and regulatory environment in which to achieve it,

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Common Council of the City of Middletown, Connecticut:

hereby declares the City of Middletown a Zero Waste Community. A Zero Waste Community can be achieved through action plans and measures that significantly reduce waste and pollution. These measures will include encouragement of residents, businesses, and agencies to judiciously use, reuse, and recycle materials, and motivation of businesses to manufacture and market less toxic and more durable, repairable, reusable, recycled, and recyclable products. The City hereby establishes an intermediate goal of reducing its residential waste stream and meeting the State's Solid Waste Management Plan goals by 2024.

This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.